

Dear Chairman Powell and Commissioners,
As a citizen who wants to be informed about the political and electoral issues that affect my life, I am greatly disappointed by the lack of informative television programming.

Local public affairs programming is virtually non-existent--constituting less than one half of 1% of all local programming. More than half of news broadcasts prior to the 2002 elections did not include a single campaign story.

In addition, most of the stories that do appear are either "horse-race" stories (that largely focus on polls) or stories that discuss where a candidate is appearing. Few of the stories address candidates' positions on substantive issues. (When was the last time you saw a news story like this: "Today, Candidate X released his or her proposals regarding health care reform. The proposals included a, b, and c.... ?")

Since broadcasters have clearly failed in their obligation to serve the public interest, the FCC should define meaningful public interest requirements that include local civic and electoral affairs programming. At a minimum, broadcasters should air three hours per week of local civic and electoral affairs programming, with at least two hours devoted to substantive election coverage in the six weeks prior to Election Day.

As the elections approach, a well-functioning democracy demands that citizens have access to a diversity of opinions and voices on the choices confronting us.

Sincerely,

Mike Dsida
2101 Manor Green Dr.
Madison, WI 537113571